

campaign, thrice, in less than a week, I saw the certain triumph of France slip through my fingers. Had it not been for a traitor I should have annihilated the enemy at the outset of the campaign. I should have destroyed him at Ligny if my left wing had only done its duty. I should have destroyed him again at Waterloo if my right had seconded me. Singular defeat, by which, notwithstanding the most fatal catastrophe, the glory of the conquered has not suffered!"¹

We shall here give Napoleon's own opinion of the battle of Waterloo.

"The plan of the battle/⁷ said he, "will not in the eyes of the historian reflect any credit on Lord Wellington as a general. In the first place, he ought not to have given battle with the armies divided. They ought to have been united and encamped before the 15th. In the next, the choice of ground was bad; because if he had been beaten he could not have retreated, as there was only one road leading through the forest in his rear. He also committed a fault which might have proved the destruction of all his army, without its ever having commenced the campaign, or being drawn out in battle; he allowed himself to be surprised. On the 15th I was at Charleroi, and had beaten the Prussians without his knowing anything about it. I had gained forty-eight hours of manoeuvres upon him, which was a great object; and if some of my generals had shown that vigor and genius which they had displayed on other occasions, I should have taken his army in cantonments without ever fighting a battle. But they were discouraged, and fancied that they saw an army of 100,000 men everywhere opposed to them. I had not time enough myself to attend to the minutiae of the army. I counted upon surprising and cutting Wellington up in detail. I knew of Bulow's arrival at eleven o'clock, but I did not regard it. I had still eighty chances out of a hundred in my favor. Notwithstanding the great superiority of force against me I was convinced that I should obtain the victory. I had about 70,000 men, of whom 15,000 were cavalry. I had also 250 pieces of

¹ *Memorial*, tome iv. p. 272.